

REMARKS

By Office Action mailed October 13, 2006, claims 14-23 stand allowed and claims 1-13 stand rejected, reconsideration of which is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and following remarks. Claims 24-27 have been cancelled. Claims 1-13 have been amended. Claims 1-23 are now pending.

Abstract

The Examiner has objected to the abstract as exceeding 150 words in length. As set forth above, Applicants have cancelled the previous Abstract and replaced it with a rewritten abstract to comply with MPEP §608.01(b) and 37 C.F.R. §1.72(b). Applicants submit that no new matter has been added by way of this amendment.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for noting the allowability of claims 14-23. Applicants have maintained such claims unchanged in the above "Listing of Claims".

Claim Amendments

By way of this Amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1-13 as follows:

- Claims 1-12, which were previously directed to an apparatus for recirculating a reactant fluid stream of a fuel cell system, have been amended to be directed to a reactant supply system for the fuel cell system comprising the apparatus, a regulator and a first solenoid valve, as recited in pending claim 1, as amended. In addition, Applicants have amended claim 1 to clarify that "the low-flow motive inlet is fluidly connected to the reactant source of the fuel cell stack such that, during operation of the fuel cell system, the first motive flow is directed to only the low-flow motive inlet when the first solenoid valve is closed and the first motive flow is directed to both the low-flow and high-flow motive inlets when the first solenoid valve is open".

- Claim 13, which is directed to the embodiment illustrated in Figure 2, has been amended to clarify that "the first motive flow inlet is fluidly connected to the pressurized

reactant supply such that, during operation of the electric power generation system, the first motive flow is directed to only the first motive flow inlet when the first solenoid valve is closed and the first motive flow is directed to both the first and second motive flow inlets when the first solenoid valve is open".

Support for these amendments may be found throughout the specification and, in particular, in Figures 1 and 2 and the corresponding description of such Figures in paragraphs [0091] through [0102] of the published application. Applicants submit that no new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Saito et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002/00171). In view of Applicants' amendments to claims 1-5, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of these claims. As noted above, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to specify, *inter alia*, that "the low-flow motive inlet is fluidly connected to the reactant source of the fuel cell stack such that, during operation of the fuel cell system, the first motive flow is directed to only the low-flow motive inlet when the first solenoid valve is closed and the first motive flow is directed to both the low-flow and high-flow motive inlets when the first solenoid valve is open". In this way, the apparatus of claims 1-5 provides for (1) the continuous flow of reactant to the low-flow motive inlet and (2) the simultaneous flow of reactant to both the low-flow and high-flow motive inlets under certain operating conditions. The device of Saito, on the other hand, comprises a switching valve 60 and provides for the flow of reactant to only one of the motive inlets 62, 63 at a time (*see* Figure 2 and paragraphs [0041]-[0043] of Saito). Accordingly, Applicants submit that Saito does not disclose every element of pending claims 1-5, as amended, and requests that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 6-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito. In view of Applicants' amendments to claims 1 and 6-13, Applicants respectfully request that these rejections be withdrawn for the following reasons.

With respect to the rejection of claims 6-12, Applicants note that the rejection of these claims is based upon the Examiner's conclusion that Saito discloses the apparatus of previously pending independent claim 1. Accordingly, in view of Applicants' traversal of the application of Saito to amended claim 1 set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 6-12 also be withdrawn.

With respect to the rejection of claim 13, as noted above, Applicants have amended such claim to specify that "the first motive flow inlet is fluidly connected to the pressurized reactant supply such that, during operation of the electric power generation system, the first motive flow is directed to only the first motive flow inlet when the first solenoid valve is closed and the first motive flow is directed to both the first and second motive flow inlets when the first solenoid valve is open". In this way, similar to the apparatus of claim 1, the electric power generation system of claim 13 provides for (1) the continuous flow of reactant to the first motive flow inlet and (2) the simultaneous flow of reactant to both the first and second motive flow inlets under certain operating conditions. As discussed above, the device of Saito, on the other hand, provides for the flow of reactant to only one of the motive inlets at a time. Furthermore, Applicants note that Saito does not contain any teaching, suggestion or motivation to modify the devices disclosed therein in order to produce the system of claim 13, as amended. In fact, Applicants submit that the teaching of Saito to provide reactant to only one of the motive inlets at a time would actually teach away from such a modification. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the cited reference fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness against claim 13, and request that this ground of rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the above, allowance of claims 1-23 is respectfully requested. A good faith effort has been made to place this application in condition for allowance. However, should any further issue require attention prior to allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at (206) 622-4900 to resolve the same. Furthermore, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Respectfully submitted,
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